

Lincoln A Christian

Though Not A "Campbellite"

By E. F. RUDEEN



LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

1923

Campbell did not do the Christian thing when he labelled his Church "The Christian Church" in connection with the creed, "I believe that immersion is essential to salvation". The proper name for that Church is "Campbellite"; as good sense and reason agree that no one organization should call itself The Christian Church, for that term applies to all those who believe in Christ, whether identified with any religious organization or not.

The Campbellite Church does not show the Christian spirit in refusing membership to those Christians who believe that John baptized WITH water; yet we read in Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:26; John 1:31; Acts 1:5, and Acts 11:16, that John baptized with water, You cannot harmonize that with immersion.

The Greek word from which the word baptize was taken, (according to the Encyclopedia Britannica) means **"To wash"** or "to dip."

The Bible speaks of sprinkling water on a person to typify washing or cleansing from sin. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean", Ezekiel 36:25.

Buried with Christ in baptism refers to Christ's baptism with the Holy Spirit. Christ's baptism and the New birth mean the same thing, for when we are Born again we are (in a spiritual sense) crucified, dead, buried and raised again to newness of life.

He that believeth and is baptised (Born again) shall be saved.

To be baptized with fire and the Holy Spirit, does not refer to two different baptisms, one material and the other spiritual; both refer to the spirit. Neither does "born of water and of the spirit" refer to two different baptisms; both refer to the New birth.

Jesus' command to baptize, in Matt. 28:19, does not refer to John's baptism, but to Christ's baptism with the Spirit. One hundred and twenty were so baptised on the day of Pentecost. We read in Acts 8:17, Acts 11:16 and Acts 19:16 that the disciples baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Of Lincoln, "The New York Christian Advocate" (Methodist) wrote: "Abraham Lincoln, the grandest character in word and work and the gentlest memory (excepting the Saviour) of all our world". He was brought up among the hard-shelled Baptists so was thoroughly familiar with their arguments on immersion essential to salvation. He was a careful student of the Bible, an ideal Christian, with a determination to OBEY God, regardless of cost; in the face of all this, Lincoln was never immersed. He held to the Quaker belief: that John's baptism was only intended to teach the lesson of the one great baptism, that is of the Spirit, and that the practice of the former should be discouraged, even as did St. Paul, for he says in 1 Cor. 1:17, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach."

"Jesus went up out of the water," does not mean that He was enveloped in the water any more than that He was enveloped in the mountain, when "He went up INTO the mountain." The early Church fathers chiselled on the walls of the catacombs their method of baptism, which was by **sprinkling**.

A lady was induced by the Campbellites to be immersed in the river in the dead of winter; the ice had to be cut in order to get her completely under the water. On the way home, her clothes froze to her body, and she died as a natural result.

John Instituted Baptism WITH Water. Who Instituted Baptism IN Water?

Campbell prohibited the use of instrumental music in his churches. To apply that law to the Christian Church would rob it of one of its greatest powers of blessing. Jesus told us to rejoice and be exceedingly

glad, and music is one of the best means of expressing our joy. King David found it so.

Campbell taught that the term, "breaking bread" (Acts 20:7) means the partaking of crackers and grape juice, as a religious form and that his followers observe it each Sunday morning, stating that that was the practice of the primitive Church. Yet we read in the 11th verse of the same chapter that St. Paul broke bread the first thing Monday morning. These refer to a meal. We read in Acts 2:44-46, that the primitive Church held all their earthly goods in common and continued daily in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house. There is also a spiritual meaning to the breaking of bread as when we feast on God's word, for so Jesus teaches in John 6:47-51, "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Jesus often had to use material means to teach His spiritual lesson. Just as a builder erects a scaffolding, in building a house, and removes the scaffolding when the house is built, so the religious ceremonies served their purpose.

The sacrificing of the innocent lamb was to remind the people of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Rev. 13:8.

There is also a beautiful spiritual meaning to blood atonement, circumcision, baptism, Lord's supper, washing of feet, etc.

The Quakers, who are a Godly people, emphasize the thing symbolized and ignore the symbol, which to my humble judgment is proper.

That Lincoln did not belong to any one special church was providential, for no one can say that Lincoln was a Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, etc. But he did belong to all those who are anchored in the atonement; for he said, "All that was lost by the transgression of Adam was made good by the atonement, all that was lost by the fall was made good by the sacrifice." Though not a Church member, and while President of this war-torn country when its people demanded every minute of his time, yet he found time to be a regular attendant at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, not only the two services on Sunday, but also the Wednesday night prayer-meeting. That is a good record for a Church member. His reason for not joining the Church was: "I have never united myself with any Church, because I have found difficulty in giving my assent without mental reservation to the long complicated statements of Christian doctrine that characterize their articles of belief and confessions of faith. Whenever any Church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, the Saviour's condensed statement of the substance of both LAW and GOSPEL, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church I will join with all my heart and all my mind."

It is glorious to know that that simple statement of Jesus is fast becoming the standard of the best churches.

It is quite probable that if it were left to a vote of the members of the Campbellite Church, the majority would favor Lincoln's Church-membership qualification. As it is impossible to Love God supremely without recognizing Jesus as His only begotten Son and our personal Savior many godly people in that Church prefer to call their church "The Disciples Church"—a term that does not infringe on other Christian Churches.

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Addenda

Before this leaflet was printed for general distribution, a proof was submitted to a pastor of the Christian Church in Los Angeles, who, in acknowledgment of same, wrote to me as follows:

Jan. 10, 1923.

My dear Sir:

I have read your article on "Lincoln a Christian," and refrain from writing my views, but would rather talk with you face to face, but if you cannot reason any better in conversation than you do in writing, I will suggest it would not be worth while to waste your time or mine, for I am busy with the Lord's work.

If you want to come, seeking the truth, and not what you or I think, I will be glad to give you time, but I want a man to be wise enough to know truth when he sees it.

The foregoing letter needs no word of comment on my part.